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TAGS: [MOPS](#) [MARR](#) [MCAP](#) [AF](#) [LH](#)
SUBJECT: (C) LITHUANIA MAY PLACE CAVEAT ON FORCES DEPLOYING
TO AFGHANISTAN

REF: VILNIUS 393

Classified By: POL/ECON CHIEF REBECCA DUNHAM FOR REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D)
)

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: Lithuania may be forced to place a caveat related to Close Air Support on special forces personnel scheduled to deploy to Afghanistan in July. Lithuania does not have Joint Terminal Air Controllers (JTACs) who are certified for NATO air-to-ground operations. DAO and ODC are working through national channels to secure JTAC training for the required personnel as soon as possible. The GOL has now identified a longer-term more systemic problem that Lithuania does not have a national process for JTAC certification. End summary.

¶2. (C) On June 7 Saulius Gasiunis, Director of the NATO/EU Department at the MOD notified the U.S. and British DATTs that Lithuania may be forced to place a caveat related to Close Air Support on special forces personnel scheduled to deploy to Afghanistan in July under the International Security Assistance Force - Special Operations Command Coordination Element (ISAF-SOCCE) currently commanded by the British. Gasiunis said the reason for the caveat was that Lithuania does not have JTACs who are certified for NATO air-to-ground operations. He requested that the UK provide JTAC training to Lithuanian special forces as soon as possible.

¶3. (C) We had previously informed the GOL of the requirements for JTAC certification as defined in the NATO Standardization Agreement (STANAG) 3797. In particular we pointed out that certification of JTACs is a national responsibility. Each NATO member country must create its own certification process. Lithuania had never created a certification system because of its small size and because it had not previously needed to certify any JTAC personnel.

¶4. (S) As reported reftel, Defense Minister Olekas asked for help with this problem on May 28, hoping that training conducted by the U.S. Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC) in 2004 - 2006 would help the Lithuanians get NATO certification. This training was conducted with the understanding that Lithuanian trained personnel would become familiar with U.S. JTAC procedures in Afghanistan. These personnel never called for Close Air Support on their own during previous deployments; they always had a USAF combat controller with them. This previous training was not meant to provide STANAG required qualifications.

¶5. (C) The GOL had also hoped training received by two officers at Spangdahlem Airbase in Germany in 2006 and 2007

would help meet the STANAG requirements. Unfortunately these two officers are conventional land forces officers and they do not have the other training necessary to operate in a SOF unit.

¶16. (C) To help Lithuania deploy its Special Forces with certified JTACs in the shortest possible timeframe, Post is seeking immediate training possibilities for SOF officers. ODC tested five of the best English-speaking Lithuanian Special Forces officers on June 15. Three of the five passed the test and so meet the U.S. qualifications to go to Spangdahlem to train. In addition, they will need to take the NATO English test at the Lithuanian Military Academy on June 19 in order to meet the STANAG standard. If at least two of them pass both tests, ODC is working with Spangdahlem to schedule training as soon as possible. While the earliest possible training date is July 23 - August 10, we understand that course is full. At this stage we have been guaranteed two slots for the Lithuanians in the September 4 - 21 course. We have also suggested to the British the possibility of having these officers take a similar JTAC course in the UK that covers STANAG initial qualification requirements.

¶17. (U) Once the Lithuanian JTACs have met the training requirements outlined in STANAG 3797, a general officer from the Lithuanian military must write and sign a letter stating that these officers are NATO JTAC certified.
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